(c) the steps taken by the Government to make the investments in the States as per the collections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (c). The amount collected by Mutual Funds sponsored by nationalised banks during the last three calender years was about Rs. 4655.5 crores. The resources raised by mutual funds are invested in capital market securities such as shares and debentures and money market instruments. Most of these instruments are not Stat specific, hence amount of state-wise investment made out of the resources mobilised cannot be given. Mutual Funds adopt their own strategy in the matter of investment based on their commercial judgement. It is not intended to regulate state-wise deployment of funds collected by mutual funds.

Ships for Andaman and Nicobar Islands

*649. SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of ships required between Andaman & Nicobar Islands and the mainland;

(b) the number of ships operating there at present; and

(c) the steps being taken to meet the full requirement of ships in order to solve the problems faced by the people of Andaman and Nicobar Island?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) As per the assessment of Andaman & Nicobar Admn. the minimum number of passenger vessels required for catering to the passenger traffic movement on the mainland-Andman & Nicobar islands sector is four.

(b) and (c). Two passenger-cum-cargo vessels are available for operation on mainland-Andman service. Out of this, one vessel namely M. V. Nicobar has been temporarily withdrawn for operating the Haj service and this vessel is expected to resume operations on mainland-Andaman sector by end August, 1992. One new passenger-cum-cargo vessel namely M. V. Nancowry has been delivered in Poland on 31.3.92 and this vessel is expected to commence operations on the mainland-Andaman sector by early May, 1992. Another passenger-cum-cargo vessel, identical to M. V. Nicobar and M. V. Nancowry is on order with a Polish Shipyard but the delivery of the vessel is uncertain. Besides, in the Eighth Plan, A&N Administration has proposed reconditioning of the passenger-cum-cargo vessel M. V. Akbar for operation for another ten years and placing order for one new passenger-cum-cargo vessel with capacity to carry 1200 passengers and 1500 tonnes of cargo.

[*English*]

Employment In Handicraft Sector

*650. SHRI PRATAPRAO B BHONSLE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether some steps are envisaged to give greater thrust on employment avenues in the handicraft sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) and (b). The handicrafts industry is essentially employment intensive and export-oriented. The 8th Plan for the handicrafts sector aims to enhance the opportunities of income and employment

from crafts as an economic activity. In order to accomplish the objective, a greater thrust has been accorded to an integrated approach encompassing various measures intended for the development, expansion and sustaining of production of handicrafts with an emphasis on design and technological development, surveys and studies, and innovative marketing strategies. A concept of craft development centres in identified craft pockets has been introduced to provide a package of inputs including design guidance, raw material, common facility services etc. to a cluster of artisans under a single umbrella. To upgrade existing skills and to develop new skilled hands, a scheme of training has also been in operation. A special programme has also been launched for revival of the languishing crafts.

U. S. AID

*651. SHRI RAM NARAIN BERWA: Will the Minister os FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of US aid to India during the last three years;

(b) whether US aid has reduced substantially during the above period;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the projects likely to suffer as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) U. S. AID assistance authorised during the last three U. S. Fiscal Years (October to September) are as follows:–

	US FY 1990 (Oct. 89 to Sept. 90)	*US FY 1991 (Oct. 90 to Sept. 91)*	*US FY 1992 (Oct. 91 to Sep. 92) (Estimated)*
Development Assistance	21.5	20.9	22.0
Title II	94.0	77.1	76.0
	115.5	98.0	98.0

Besides US $ 98.00 million to be provided in FY 1992, US $ 25.00 million worth of edible oil is likely to be made available under Title III PL 480 Programme.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

(d) None.

Tenth Finance Commission

*652. SHRI SHARAD DIGHE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to constitute the Tenth Finance Commission;

(b) if so, the time by which the same is likely to be constituted;

(c) the progress made so far in this regard;